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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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RABIES ALERT

Possible Rabid Coyote in Cortlandt Manor

The Westchester County Department of Health is issuing a Rabies Alert to residents who may have had contact with a potentially rabid coyote in the vicinity of Terrace Place in Cortlandt Manor.

A resident reported today that on June 7, a coyote attacked two dogs behind her home. The coyote killed a dachshund and came back for the carcass despite being yelled at. The 80-pound shepherd mix required 22 stitches and the owner is being treated as a precaution because she handled the injured dog immediately after the attack and may have been exposed to the coyote's saliva. The coyote's aggression and lack of fear of humans can be indicators that the animal is rabid.

As a precaution, residents in the area should not leave young children outside alone, should keep their cats inside and their dogs on leashes when outside. All pets should have their rabies vaccinations up to date. If your pet has contact with the coyote, you should wear gloves when handling your pet to avoid contact with the coyote's saliva. Anyone who believes they have spotted the coyote should report it to the police and stay away from it. Children should be taught to avoid wild and stray animals.

All animal bites or contacts with animals suspected of having rabies must be reported to the Westchester County Department of Health at (914) 813-5000, 24 hours a day.

"If you or a pet have had contact with this coyote, you should contact the Westchester County Department of Health immediately at (914) 813-5000 to assess the need for life saving rabies treatment," said Westchester County Commissioner of Health, Dr. Joshua Lipsman. "Anyone bitten by a rabid animal, or having contact with its saliva, may need to receive an immediate rabies vaccination," he said.

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When administered early enough and before symptoms develop, rabies treatment is 100 percent effective. Once symptoms occur, in humans or animals, the disease is fatal.

Unusual behavior may be the first sign of rabies in an animal. A rabid animal may become either abnormally aggressive or unusually tame. It may lose fear of people and become excited and irritable, or, conversely appear particularly passive and lethargic. Rabid animals sometimes stagger and froth at the mouth.

Direct contact with wild or stray animals, even baby animals, is always inadvisable. Parents should instruct children to refrain from touching unfamiliar animals and to immediately tell an adult if they have been bitten or scratched by an animal. Any physical contact with a wild or unfamiliar animal should be reported to a health care provider.

Keeping pet rabies vaccinations up to date is critical for protection against rabies. New York State law requires dogs, cats, and ferrets to be vaccinated against rabies and receive regular booster shots.

For more information about rabies and its prevention, residents can also call the RABIES INFOLINE at (914) 813-5010 or visit the Health Department's Website at www.westchestergov.com/health.